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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### CHRISTIAN NURSE NEEDED IN CHINA

The Foreign Christian Missionary Society of Cincinnati, Ohio, is greatly in need of a strong, well qualified Christian nurse to go to the Luchowfu Missionary Hospital in Central China. This is the only American hospital for a million and a half people. More than thirty thousands are cared for in this institution during each year. An American trained nurse is needed to take charge of the native nurses in the hospital and to help train them for service. An American physician is in charge of the hospital and soon it is expected that a second doctor will be added. It is a city of 70,000 people and there are nine missionaries there. The nurse who goes to take up this work should recognize the primacy of Christian service in the undertaking. This hospital is under the direction of the religious body called the Disciples of Christ. Much religious work is carried on in the institution and there is a rare opportunity for real service, both physical and spiritual.

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### LETTERS FROM NAVY NURSES

#### VI

Since the former notes were sent to the JOURNAL from this far off field, the work has assumed greater proportions. The medical officers and nurses have felt an increasing need for more help and the commandant has approved a request for additional nurses. There is now a period of anxious waiting while the Powers in Washington weigh the pros and cons of the question.

In giving an outline of our work I must preface it with a brief statement of the general conditions. The Samoan Hospital consists of three large and an equal number of small native houses. These are built, *perched* is a better word, on the side of a steep mountain, no two being on the same level. The large houses shelter the patients from three provinces; men, women and children in the same building. The small houses are intended for the chiefs of each province. The baths and closets are in separate buildings many feet below the hospital. As there is no provision in these buildings for the disposition of excreta, of the bed patients, the bed pans have to be carried to the sea to be emptied and washed. This involves a long hard climb and the attendant performing the duty has to be closely watched else the pans are emptied on the ground.

The water supply is a mountain stream piped into tanks. The amount of water is ample during the abundant rain-falls, but a few days of continuous sunshine dries the stream to a mere rivulet; the tanks are soon emptied and there is no water! This has been the condition for nearly two weeks. All the water used has been carried a long distance and all hot water must be brought from the

Dispensary building which is some distance away. The result is obvious; baths are ruled out and the strictest economy prevails.

A difficult problem is the dietary. The patients are obliged to supply their own food. This makes it practically impossible to control the diet and to give them the proper nourishment for the various ailments. This arrangement also makes it necessary that each patient have a friend to provide the food. A demoralizing effect results and prevents the enforcement of hospital rules and regulations. Given a building with mixed patients, the majority of whom have a friend in attendance and you have a situation which is confusing to say the least.



NAVY NURSES AT WORK IN SAMOAN HOSPITAL

The hospital equipment is most meagre and this fact cripples efficient work. Some iron cribs for the babies have been received and have added greatly to the comfort of the nurses. A mat on the floor is the usual bed. This mat was often missing and the wee things had discoloration at the base of the spine from contact with the hard floors. There are a few cots for the adults but the majority have to lie on their mats. This is not so uncomfortable for the patient, as they are accustomed to the hard surface, but nursing treatment is rendered much more difficult. In time we hope to have cots or bunks of some sort for all the patients.

At present we have four pupil nurses. They have spent ten years in a girls' school conducted by women missionaries connected with the London Mission. These girls understand and speak a very limited amount of English. Their school work was taught almost entirely in their own language and consisted of

reading, spelling, numbers, writing, geography, hygiene, sewing, pillow lace work and some knowledge of cooking. Best of all, they are splendidly disciplined. Obedience is thoroughly ingrained and is their strongest asset.

Every utensil used in the hospital was new to the girls, therefore, the first lessons were spent in teaching them the names and uses of the various articles. Their ability to memorize is quite remarkable; in a few days they had mastered the names of all the articles used in the houses.

The instruction in nursing began with the clinical thermometer which they learned to read in a remarkably short time. Then followed some elementary lessons in physiology and anatomy. A large proportion of the babies, who are



NAVY NURSES AND FOUR NATIVE NURSES, TUTUILA, SAMOA

entered as patients, have severe bowel trouble resultant from being fed taro and bananas. In order to reach the mothers and teach them the evil consequences of such infant feeding, it seemed imperative to first make the pupil nurses understand why babies should not be given such diet. The girls did not know that food was eaten for any other purpose than the pleasure produced in consuming it. To give them a different point of view we have taught the process of digestion. By making the outline very simple, they have learned and appear to understand the story of food.

Class work began two months ago. In this period the pupils have obtained some knowledge of the human skeleton; they have learned the names of various muscles and joints, and know something of the circulation of the blood. Yesterday the class work consisted of the dissection of a chicken. They gave the organs

the correct names and surprised and pleased me by knowing at a glance which was "the food pipe" and which the wind pipe. They told without hesitation the joints, the tendons terminating the muscles, the large and small intestine, membranes, etc. This is largely memory work, of course, and is a remarkable feat, as it involved learning all this in a foreign language.

The difficulty, to them, and the struggle for us will be in applying this memorized knowledge to the work. Their reasoning power is embryonic. It is no more developed than that of a child of twelve years. The arousing of that which has been so dormant will be a slow and discouraging process, but the accuracy and efficiency of their nursing work depend upon this development. With their present mental equipment the result of our efforts will be commensurate with that obtained by instructing girls of ten years in a civilized country.

At present we are teaching the treatment for conjunctivitis (which is very prevalent) and the danger of infection from flies and from direct contact with the disease. We are also giving the instruction in the care of babies' feeding bottles; the preparation of "———— Food" (which is in general use in the Island); the necessity of regularity in feedings and the general care of the babies. This work is within the compass of the mentality of the pupils and their progress in this branch is helped by the strongly developed love of children and reverence for motherhood, which these people possess to a marked degree.

I enclose the story of food, submitted just as it was written by one of the pupils in a recent examination which Dr. E., gave our class.

H.

#### THE STORY OF THE FOOD

(After 2 months instruction)

"We put the food in the mouth to eat, than going down to the food pipe, and reach into the stomach inside of the stomach has the glands, the gastric juice. The gastric juice it makes soft the food in the stomach it is soft. The valves opens and goes the food to the small intestines. In the small intestines it has lacteals pick the good food, and convey the good mitrey (material) to the different orang (organs) and the different orang changes into cases (gases). And in little red corpusales (corpuscles) fill with up the cases, and then the plab (blood) carries the little red carpusales over the body. But the waist materials its goes to the larges intestines and then begin go out."